Accountability Report
2014–2015

Public Service Commission

NOVA SCOTIA

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Public Service Commission for the year ended March 31, 2015 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Public Service Commission's Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Public Service Commission's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by the Commission's management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission's management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Public Service Commission's 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

Signed,

The Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Minister, Public Service Commission

Laura Lee Langley
Commissioner, Public Service Commission

Message from the Minister and Public Service Commissioner

This report highlights the Public Service Commission's (PSC) achievements from 2014-2015. These accomplishments have strengthened our commitment to client-focused service delivery and increased our focus on diversity and employee engagement throughout government.

In 2014-2015, the PSC established a new vision for the department in consultation with PSC employees that emphasizes engagement and innovation and will guide the department in our strategic planning and support our strategic priorities and objectives into the future.

The PSC continued to make progress on our organizational restructuring in 2014-2015. This included welcoming the Public Service Renewal team to our organization and making structural changes to our client service delivery model. By improving our HR programs, enhancing client service delivery, and supporting continuous process improvement while strengthening role clarity, communication and collaboration within the PSC, we will help departments to better serve Nova Scotians.

Some examples of achievements over the past year include the development of My HR, which provides online access to individualized HR services for employees and managers; comprehensive absence management programs, including a new short-term illness program; and a suite of career development programs and supports that range from orientation to learning and mentoring to counseling.

The PSC continued its focus on building a diverse, engaged, productive workforce, both within the department and across government. The addition of the Public Service Renewal team allowed the PSC to strengthen our corporate diversity and employee engagement efforts and provide better support to our clients. The PSC introduced two key strategies – the diversity and inclusion strategy and the employee engagement strategy – and has already begun collaborating with departments and networks on the implementation of strategic actions.

The PSC is committed to making the public service a better place to work. We continue to focus on actions that respond to concerns identified in the 2013 "How's Work Going?" employee survey and look forward to tracking our progress in the coming year when the results from our 2015 survey will be made available.

The actions outlined above, and detailed within this report, show how the PSC continues to adapt to change and build a strong public service for Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Minister, Public Service Commission

Laura Lee Langley
Commissioner, Public Service Commission

1.0 Introduction

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to being open and accountable. Annual statements of mandate and accountability reports are essential tools for government departments, agencies and concerned stakeholders to assess organizational performance.

This annual Accountability Report for the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission (PSC) is based on the outcomes, strategic actions, achievements and progress in meeting the intended performance measures set out in the PSC's 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate, which is available on the PSC's website at: http://novascotia.ca/psc/about/overview/businessPlanAccountabilityReport.asp.

In both establishing and working towards these goals and priorities, the PSC is guided by its mandate, vision, and mission. In 2014-2015, the PSC's mandate and mission remained unchanged and were as follows:

- Mandate: To ensure that the Nova Scotia Government has the human resources required to create and deliver high-quality programs and services to citizens. The PSC is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating human resource policies, programs, services and standards. The PSC is responsible for ensuring high-quality corporate human resource management principles, values and practices. The PSC is the government's agent for collective bargaining for direct government employees.

- Mission: To provide expert, respected human resources advice, services and solutions.

In February 2014, however, the PSC's vision was reviewed and refined through various workshops held with PSC employees as part of our five-year strategic planning initiatives. This new vision guided the PSC through the strategic planning process and supported our strategic priorities and objectives.

In 2013-2014, our vision was: *Strategic human resource business partners and leaders, committed to client service excellence.* In 2014-2015, the vision was changed to: *Inspired, client-focused professionals delivering innovative HR programs to advance employee engagement and the work of the Nova Scotia public service.*

The four strategic objectives established in 2013-2014 remained unchanged. These objectives stemmed from the PSC's mandate and supported excellence in client service delivery, organizational leadership and also demonstrate how we align with government's core priorities. The PSC's strategic objectives were:

- To create an efficient, high-performing, competent civil service responsive to employees, client departments and the public.
- To adopt superior human resource (HR) management principles, values and practices.
- To develop and implement effective policies, programs, services and standards.
- To provide effective collective bargaining advice and services to direct employees of government.

1.1 Department Update

During fiscal 2013-2014, the PSC embarked on a five-year strategic planning initiative. The first phase of the initiative was to establish a new vision for the department through a consultation process with PSC employees, which, as stated previously, was announced in February 2014.

The PSC also continued its organizational restructuring and during fiscal 2014-2015, it welcomed the Public Service Renewal Office to the organization. The Public Service Renewal Office spearheads employee engagement efforts to support the department's and government's priorities.

Structural changes to the client service delivery model were announced as well in 2014-2015. The new structure aims to improve HR programs, enhance client service delivery, and support continuous process improvement while strengthening role clarity, communication, and collaboration within the PSC.

2.0 Financial Results

Public Service Commission			
	2014-2015 Estimate	2014-2015 Actual	Variance Actual to Estimate Over/(Under)
Program & Service Area	($thousands)	($thousands)	($thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses			
Client Service Delivery	10,320.0	9,765.8	(554.2)
Employee Relations	875.0	1,231.4	365.4
Office of the Commissioner	470.0	484.4	14.4
Public Service Renewal	1,186.0	1,365.5	179.5
Strategy & System Performance	5,339.0	4,843.2	(495.8)
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	**18,190**	**17,690.3**	(499.7)
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ordinary Recoveries	(76.0)	(149.5)	(73.5)
TCA Purchase Requirements	0.0	0.0	0.0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	198.2	183.6	(14.6)

Gross Departmental Expenses:
The overall variance for the Public Service Commission is the result of vacancy savings due to efficiencies.

In 2014-2015 the Public Service Commission was undergoing a transformation to improve service delivery and maximize efficiencies. These reorganizational changes included a number of position transfers within the Commission. With the exception of vacancy savings, the individual variances within program areas is the result of these position transfers.

Ordinary Recoveries:
Recovery added in 2014-2015 from Nova Scotia Community College for an external secondment.

3.0 Measuring Our Performance

As the corporate human resources service provider for government, the PSC is responsible for corporate HR policies, programs and services that assist all government departments in meeting their respective HR goals. In 2012-2013, the PSC developed two main outcomes that relate to our vision, mission, and mandate: engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals; and improved service delivery through accountability and engagement. For the 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate, these two outcomes remained relevant to our work, as they represent clear, measurable, and focused goals that are achievable.

For each outcome, the PSC identified performance measures and targets to provide evidence that an activity/program is achieving its intended outcome. The majority of our performance measures are based on the agreement (or favourable) scores from the corporate "How's Work Going?" employee engagement survey. The measures in this report are based on the 2015 high level results. In addition, the PSC Client Satisfaction Survey that was first conducted in 2011 established baseline data for the PSC to measure the factors that influence client satisfaction and service delivery.

Each outcome has a set of strategic actions that were developed in consultation with staff and senior leadership within the department. The strategic actions are divided into corporate and departmental initiatives that aim to support and focus our work towards achieving the intended outcomes. In the 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate, the PSC identified 11 strategic actions.

For each outcome, progress on each strategic action is described, followed by tables analyzing their performance measures results. The PSC is confident that these measures and strategic actions reflect progress towards achieving our intended outcomes both corporately and internally to the PSC.

3.1 Outcome: Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals

The following are project status updates for each strategic action listed under the outcome, *"Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals"* in the 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

Corporate-focused strategic actions:

Prepare for and commence negotiations for the next round of bargaining as collective agreements expire during this fiscal year.

- Work continues – Negotiations with CUPE Highway Workers will continue into the next fiscal year. The Civil Service Employer Bargaining Committee has been formed and the committee meets early in the 2015-2016 fiscal year to prepare proposals for Civil Service collective bargaining.

Develop Corporate Employee Engagement Strategy (PSC Lead) in collaboration with the other stakeholders.

- Complete – The *"Pride in the Public Service"* is a three-year strategy. It was launched on February 26, 2015 through a broadcast message and a video from the Minister and Commissioner. The strategy (available in French and English), including all supporting documents and a video, have been posted on government's internal intranet site called "iConnect" for all employees to view. Communication and implementation of the strategy will continue during fiscal 2015-2016.

Communicate the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and implement its recommendations.

- Work continues – *"Raising the Bar"* is a corporate four-year diversity and inclusion strategy. The strategy was launched on October 6, 2014 and is available in French and English on the PSC's external website at http://novascotia.ca/psc/employeeCentre/diverseWorkforce/strategy.asp. One of the objectives of the strategy is to improve assessment, measurement, and research of diversity and inclusion practices to support accountability and ongoing learning and change. In support of this, consultations have been completed on improving and enhancing the collection, analysis and accessible reporting of employee demographic data. Our aim is to increase employees' comfort to self-identify using a new tool in 2015-2016.

Improve PSC's approach to strategic planning and measurement. This will include: client satisfaction survey; PSC Scorecard; and HR Dashboard.

- Work continues - The Client Satisfaction Survey is planned for 2015-2016 fiscal. The HR Dashboard was rolled out to Deputy Ministers and the HR community in December 2014. The strategic objectives and projects were presented to PSC staff in December 2014 and the key priorities were incorporated into the 2015-2016 Statement of Mandate.

Create employee development programs that support talent and succession management and enhance our ability to attract, retain and build the capacity of our "early career" employees. Initiatives include: an enhanced employee orientation program; a new mentorship program; a dedicated Career Development Specialist; and enhanced leadership development programs and tools.

- **Completed – The new Corporate Employee Orientation Program (including both online and in-class modules) was launched in 2014-2015 and received very positive feedback. The new mentorship program called "iNSpire" recruited a significant number of volunteers to be mentors and had a successful launch in March 2015. The mentors will continue to receive information about how to support mentees. Career development tools and a new website have been launched and continue to be enhanced. The one-on-one career development services have been very successful as has the new program "The Self-Managed Career."**

PSC-focused strategic actions:

The Senior Leadership Council will work collaboratively with the PSC's Employee Engagement Committee to implement their recommendations as they relate to the engagement drivers from the PSC's 2013 "How's Work Going?" employee survey results, e.g. improving internal PSC communications.

- Complete – The PSC Employee Engagement Committee has been reconstituted with involvement of members of the Senior Leadership Council. The Commissioner is part of the committee and works with the members to make contributions towards activities designed to improve engagement within the PSC. The work is focused on actions that respond to employee concerns identified in the 2013 "How's Work Going?" employee survey. The committee is awaiting the new 2015 survey results so it may course correct and/or refine its efforts depending on the new information received.

3.1.1 Performance Measures for Outcome: Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals

The following performance measures originate from the "How's Work Going?" biennial employee survey (http://novascotia.ca/psc/employeeCentre/employeeSurvey/). These measures were chosen to indicate progress for the outcome: *an engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals*. All of the indices are based on an Employee Engagement Model and common questions, first developed in collaboration with nine provinces, three territories and the federal government. The indices align with the corporate engagement strategy pillars; each provides insight on an aspect of employee engagement. All indices are reported on a scale of 0 to 100.

Level of Employee Engagement: Employee Engagement is defined as the extent to which employees feel connected to, and involved with, their jobs and their organization. The Employee Engagement Index is calculated based on six key indicator questions. This is consistent with the approach in past surveys and consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

Talent Capacity Index: The Talent Index reports on employees' perceptions of NS Government's ability to attract and develop its human resources. The Index is the average of two key indicator questions relating to opportunities for career growth and advancement, and learning and development opportunities.

Workplace Culture Index: The Workplace Culture Index reports on employees' perceptions of the physical, social and organizational environment in which they work. The Index is the average of six key indicator questions relating to co-worker relationships, recognition, employee involvement and innovation, quality work life, and diverse, inclusive and respectful environment.

Targets set for fiscal 2014-2015 were established as ranges in order to reflect more realistic goals for the department to achieve. As defined by the Employee Engagement Inter-jurisdictional Committee: areas of strength are percentages that fall within the 60 -100% range; opportunities to build agreement fall within the 51-59% range; and areas of concern fall within the 0-50% range.

Table 1A outlines the corporate (government-wide) results for this outcome, and Table 1B outlines the PSC's departmental results. Corporately, the high level results for these indices remained relatively stable as compared to 2013. In Table 1B, the PSC's departmental results for 2015 increased significantly for all indices. All performance measures have been carried forward to fiscal 2015-2016.

The PSC is aware that further work is necessary in order to increase employee engagement within the public service. We are confident, however, that by achieving the goals and objectives as outlined in the corporate employee engagement and diversity and inclusion strategies, we will see positive impacts on all of these measures.

Corporate results: Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals								
Performance Measure	Corporate Trend Analysis						Fiscal 2014-2015 Target	Measure Carried Forward to 2015-2016
	2006	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015		
Level of Employee Engagement	67%	72%	74%	62%	60%	60%	Maintain as an area of strength (i.e. 60-74%)	Yes
Talent Capacity Index	n/a	n/a	64%	58%	48%	47%	Increase to be within an area of strength range (i.e. 60-74%)	Yes
Workplace Culture Index	n/a	n/a	72%	61%	60%	61%	Maintain as an area of strength (i.e. 60-74%)	Yes

Table 1A – Corporate performance measures and results

PSC departmental results: Engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals								
Performance Measure	PSC Trend Analysis						Fiscal 2014-2015 Target	Measure Carried Forward to 2015-2016
	2006	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015		
Level of Employee Engagement	n/a	83%	81%	60%	52%	75%	Increase to an area of strength (i.e. 60-74%)	Yes
Talent Capacity Index	n/a	n/a	n/a	58%	40%	59%	Increase to be within an area of strength range (i.e. 60-74%)	Yes
Workplace Culture Index	n/a	n/a	n/a	66%	64%	76%	Maintain as an area of strength (i.e. 60-74%)	Yes

Table 1B – PSC departmental performance measures and results

3.2 Outcome: Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement

The following are project status updates for each strategic action listed under the outcome, "*Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement*" in the 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

Corporate-focused strategic actions:

Review Government's Absence Management processes and develop an integrated Absence Management model that will incorporate all workplace health and disability programs, including prevention, wellness, attendance, early intervention, health and safety initiatives, claim management, recovery resources and return to work.

- Completed – All implementation activities completed on schedule by March 31, 2015. The new Short Term Illness Support Program was successfully implemented on April 1, 2015.

Develop access to online HR support and information to improve service delivery.

- Work continues – Phase 2 of MyHR was completed on schedule by March 31, 2015. MyHR provides on-line access to HR services individualized for PSC employees, managers, and government employees. MyHR is scheduled to be launched for client access during fiscal 2015-2016 after a trial period for PSC employees.

Review corporate HR policies (Management Manual 500), conduct a gap assessment, and then develop a plan to ensure corporate HR policies are current and relevant.

- Work continues – This is a multi-year strategic action. The project charter and project plan have been developed. The current state assessment will be completed in June 2015. Other elements of the project including consultations will occur during fiscal 2015-2016.

PSC-focused strategic actions:

Complete the implementation of the PSC's organizational restructuring, including implementing earlier process improvement recommendations and exploring further opportunities for continuous process improvement.

- Work continues – The structural realignments and supports that set the ground work for the new Service Delivery Model have been made and now PSC team members are moving into the new system. The next step is to refine and LEAN our processes to conform with the new model. The commitment for 2014-2015 is complete; however, the ongoing work will be refinement of process during 2015-2016.

In response to the Auditor General's report (January 2014), the PSC will review its records management practices.

- Work continues – The Auditor General Recommendations Working Group is continuing efforts to address the recommendations. Leads have been assigned to each of the three recommendations. It is expected that the Working Group will complete its work by March 31, 2016.

3.2.1 Performance Measures for Outcome: Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement

Table 2 below outlines the measures for the outcome related to improved service delivery through accountability and engagement. All measures are based on the PSC's Client Satisfaction Survey. Refreshing and implementing the PSC client satisfaction framework and tools, including the survey, has been established as a strategic action for the 2015-2016 fiscal year as the PSC continues work on improving our approach to strategic planning and measurement; therefore, no new measurements have been determined until this strategic action has been completed.

For all measures, the PSC is working towards increasing or maintaining agreement scores within the area of strength range.[1] In addition, they have all been carried forward to fiscal 2015-2016. Our ultimate targets set for 2015-2016 were carried forward as our new ultimate targets for 2017-2018.

Outcome: Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement				
Performance Measure (from PSC Client Satisfaction Survey)	No Trend Data Available		Ultimate Targets (2015-2016)	Measure Carried Forward to 2015-2016
	2011 (Baseline)	Fiscal 2014-2015 Target		
% of program areas that scored 60% or above for client's satisfaction with the amount of time it took to get the service they required	36%	Increase to 50%	Increase to be within area of strength range	Yes
% of program areas that scored 60% or above for clients who feel PSC staff are knowledgeable and competent	71%	Increase to 75%	To maintain as an area of strength	Yes
Average percentage (index) of clients satisfied with the overall quality of service they received from the PSC	54%	Increase to 60%	Increase to be within area of strength range	Yes

Table 2 Performance Measures for Outcome: Improved service delivery through accountability and engagement

[1] As measured in the PSC Client Satisfaction Survey, agreement scores of 60-100% are categorized as areas of strength.

4.0 Significant Events and Accomplishments

This section describes other significant events and accomplishments that were not identified as strategic actions in the 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

Support for First Annual Diversity Conference

In October 2014, more than 300 people attended the Nova Scotia government's first ever diversity conference themed *Learn. Engage. Act*. This event was organized and led by employees, supported by the Public Service Commission and other government departments. The event included a networking breakfast where Deputy Ministers met with their senior executive counterparts from the private sector who shared their diversity and inclusion successes. The day included activities focused on professional development, awareness raising, skill development, relationship building, and self-reflection. The conference was organized and hosted by the Diversity Round Table and employee networks, and was seen as a success, surpassing expectations.

Intercultural and Diversity competency

The Public Service Commission uses performance management as a strategic tool to ensure individual employees' efforts are focused on the priorities and strategies of departments and of Government. The Leadership Competencies apply to all employees in the excluded classification, levels 6-17, including those who have manage staff and those who are individual contributors. Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to do a job. In the Nova Scotia Government, managers are expected to demonstrate strong leadership skills.

Diversity and inclusion is an important part of leadership in the public service. As part of strengthening this concept, in 2014-15, Intercultural & Diversity Proficiency became a required competency for all excluded employees. Intercultural & Diversity Proficiency is demonstrating an understanding of cultural differences and respect for other cultures. This includes a commitment to recognize diversity both between and within cultural groups. On a scale of one to four, most managers are expected to demonstrate this competency at level four. The competency, behavioural indicators, and definitions were developed in consultation with the Diversity Round Table and vetted through the Hay Group for measurability.

Positive Spaces Pilot

During the past year, the Public Service Commission successfully piloted a Positive Spaces initiative in three government departments, and is preparing to implement the initiative across government. The Positive Spaces initiative aims to create a critical mass of Allies throughout the organization who work together to create safe, respectful, and equitable work environments for LGBTIQ employees. The placement of an indicator within the Ally's workstation increases the visibility and awareness of diverse sexual orientations, sexes, and gender identities/expressions in the workplace. The educational component of the initiative includes two training courses: *Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity 101* and *Becoming an Ally*.

5.0 Report on Disclosure of Wrongdoing

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committe and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of this Act is:

a. A contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
b. A misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
c. An act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
d. Directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Public Service Commission did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2014-2015
The number of disclosures received	Nil
The number of findings of wrongdoing	n/a
Details of each wrongdoing	n/a
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	n/a